

Stages and the Wyoming Comprehensive Assessment System Alternate Assessment [WyCAS-Alt] Process

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal assessment software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances the Wyoming alternate assessment process because:

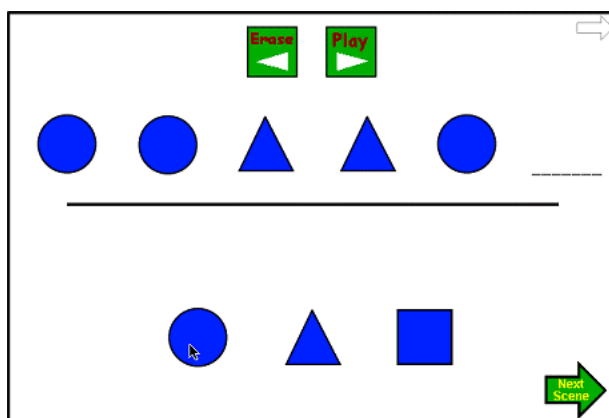
- **Stages aligns with the Wyoming Content Standards.**
- **Stages generates primary evidence for the learner's AIMS portfolio.**
- **Stages Observation Forms increase the objectivity and efficiency of observations.**
- **Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.**
- **Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.**

1. Stages aligns with the Wyoming Content Standards.

Stages ensures meaningful and effective access to Wyoming's Content Standards in Language Arts and Mathematics through the Expanded Content Standards. Please refer to the section, "How Stages Correlates with Wyoming's Expanded Content Standards" for detailed matching.

2. Stages generates primary evidence for the learner's AIMS portfolio.

During Stages software activities, the instructor can print directly from any screen to capture a student-created product. At the end of each activity, a report with instructional data about the time spent, choices made, response accuracy or work product, input method, prompt type/frequency, and time/date stamp are displayed with the learner's name. The instructional team member may wish to then print that screen or save the information as a text-format electronic file.



Example screen shot from Stage Four: Create Patterns

3. Stages Observation Forms increase the objectivity and efficiency of observations.

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructional team make the most out of an activity session. The data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. Two adults from the instructional team can work together: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while one adult coaches. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid. Over time, the collected data will provide evidence that the instructional team needs to build a complete picture of the learner's skill achievement.

4. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.

The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating skills with minimal supervision. Many Stages activities include accessible choice-making opportunities. Functional skills activities include various community settings.

5. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.

An objective of Stages software is to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's instructor, parents, and others in the IEP team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables that help the instructor create an environment that corresponds with the motor skills of the learner.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the Wyoming alternative assessment cycle. Together, the Stages set of activities and recommended curriculum practice software provide a comprehensive benchmark tool. Stages activities are designed to assist the instructional/IEP team in collecting primary evidence for the learner's AIMS portfolio, determine assessment strategy, and discover the learner's abilities and thinking approach.

How Stages Correlates with Wyoming's Expanded Content Standards¹

Language Arts Expanded Standards and Examples of Real World Performance Indicators²

Reading Expanded Standard: Students read a variety of materials, applying strategies appropriate to various situations.

- Use picture cues to follow [and/or retell] a story.
- Respond to picture cue.
- Read simple sentences.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: All Activities

Stage Six: All 'Explore' Activities

Stories: Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

- In Stage Three, the learner can choose a desired activity and also make choices from items on the screen in response to a prompt.
- In Stage Six *Explore* Activities, the learner chooses from several items on the screen to read and listen to a short description of the selected item.
- Stage Six *Stories* present the learner with self-paced passages about real people doing daily living tasks and activities.

- Find information in a newspaper or magazine.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Charts and Graphs

- *Charts and Graphs* gives the learner an opportunity to apply knowledge of common graphic features to locate facts in order to answer questions.

- Recognize symbols on an augmentative communication device.
- Read and follow written directions.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: All Activities

- In Stage Three, the learner can choose a desired activity and also make choices from items on the screen in response to a prompt. Mayer-Johnson PCS Symbols are used together with verbal and written prompts.
- In general (all other Stages), the observation forms help the instructor systematically record the learner's behavior in response to the directions given by each activity.

¹ Information from the Wyoming Comprehensive Assessment System Alternate Assessment Handbook, Chatham Educational Consultants, Inc., 2000. Accessed August 29, 2002 through <http://www.measuredprogress.org/wycas/AltAssess/AltImplementation/AltImplementation.htm>

² Information from the Wyoming Language Arts & Mathematics Expanded Content Standards, Judy Catchpole. Accessed August 30, 2002, <http://www.k12.wy.us/specialprograms/Docs/expanded.pdf>

Writing Expanded Standard: Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

- Participate in the development of experience stories.
- Communicate with a peer in a written format.
- Use appropriate technology for writing.
- Create and send messages, such as notes, greeting cards and electronic mail.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: *Making Sentences:* Building Sentences, Writing Sentences
 Making Stories

- Using Stage Seven *Building Sentences*, the learner can form sentences using a word wall. The learner who is able to use an onscreen accessible keyboard, regular keyboard, or alternative keyboard can write sentences in response to instructor-written prompts in *Writing Sentences*.
- Using *Making Stories*, the learner can write multiple sentences with the aid of a photograph or imported graphic as a prompt. The text-to-speech feature gives the learner an opportunity to play back what is written. *Making Stories* also gives the learner a way to express feelings related to life experiences, respond to a story, or independently create samples of written work such as letters, poems and journals. The report displays settings such as time, date, font size and style.

- Trace numerous shapes or letters.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Reading Readiness:* Letter Sounds, Letter ID

- *Letter* activities in Stage Four present the learner with letters and their sounds to explore and then identify using an input device.

Listening Expanded Standard: Students listen for a variety of purposes.

- Participate in small groups.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Tic-Tac-Toe

- In this accessible version of the classic game, the learner can play a game with a peer using an appropriate input device.

- Respond appropriately to picture board cues.
- Identify preferences [for snack, lunch, and meal].
- Restate instructions or events in a story.
- Listen attentively to talking books.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Reading:* Sounds (Rhyming)

Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

- Stage Two and Stage Five *Sounds* activities give the learner an opportunity to listen to rhyming passages read aloud by the computer.
- Stage Six *Stories* present short fictional passages about real people. The instructor can make observations about the learner's behavior during listening.

Speaking Content Standard: Students read a variety of materials, applying strategies appropriate to various situations.

- Use augmentative communication device to communicate.
- Use communication board.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Stories

- *Making Stories* gives the non-verbal learner a way to compose text and retell stories or events focused on a topic and then use text-to-speech capability to present the text to others. This activity can also help the instructor determine the a communication device is appropriate for the learner.

Mathematics

Expanded Standards and Examples of Real World Performance Indicators

Number Operations and Concepts Expanded Standard: Students use numbers, number sense, and number relationships in a problem-solving situation.

- Recognize difference between penny, nickel, dime, and quarter.
- Identify money and its worth (e.g., quarter = 25¢).
- Count pennies, nickels, dimes, and/or quarters to a specified amount.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: *Explore:* Money Orientation

Assess: Money Identification, Counting Money, Money Equivalents

- In Stage Six *Money Orientation*, the learner is presented with coins up to 25¢ and bills up to \$20. In *Money Equivalents* the learner is asked to identify equivalent amounts of currency that adds up to given amounts. Realistic scenarios are part of the money assessment to help the learner relate the concepts to life activities.

- Order items when given an attribute, such as smaller to larger.
- Compare size and/or quantity (e.g., big, little or small, medium, large).
- Classify objects by shape, color, or size.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: *Category Identification:* Animals, Clothing, Vehicles

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Estimating

Explore and Assess: Shape ID

Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Mystery Shape, Number Guess

- *Category Identification* activities in Stage Three ask the learner to sort familiar objects into categories.
- Stage Four *Estimating* asks the learner to compare objects in a scene using relative size vocabulary such as ‘biggest/smallest.’ *Shape ID* gives the learner an opportunity to identify two-dimensional shapes in drawings or photographs in scenes and isolation.
- In Stage Five *Mystery Shape* the learner compares the attributes of two-dimensional shapes in order to deduce the correct choice. *Number Guess* gives the learner an opportunity to demonstrate the ability to compare numbers, given feedback about relative magnitude (“That number is too high/low”).

Geometry Expanded Standard: Students apply geometric concepts, properties, and relationships in a problem-solving situation.

- Recognize safety signs by shape and/or symbol.
- Recognize community signs by shape and/or symbol.

Related Stages Activities

Stage Six: *Explore and Assess:* Recognizing Signs

- Community signs in these activities relate to the *Stories* activities and include photographs of scenes from those activities.

Measurement Expanded Standard: Students use a variety of tools and techniques of measurement in a problem-solving situation.

- Fill containers to appropriate levels.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Fractions

- In *Fractions*, the learner selects the correct number of sections of a whole object to display the correct fraction. The learner also selects the correct fraction of objects out of a group of objects.

- Use an alarm clock to get up at a designated time.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Explore and Assess: Telling Time

- As a lower-level entry point to this standard, the learner can demonstrate the ability to tell time. In *Stage Six Telling Time*, correct responses and distracter targets are coordinated to help the instructor determine patterns in incorrect learner responses. Digital and analog clocks are included.

Algebraic Concepts and Relationships Expanded Standard: Students use algebraic methods to investigate, model, and interpret patterns and functions involving numbers, shapes, data and graphs in a problem-solving situation.

- Follow a pattern.
- Use beads to follow a pattern.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Explore Patterns, Continue/Fill-In Patterns, Create Patterns

- Stage Four gives the learner an opportunity to first observe simple repeating sequences of geometric shapes, sound, and color in *Explore Patterns*. The learner is asked to complete sequences of shapes by choosing the correct shape in *Continue/Fill-In Patterns*. Finally, *Create Patterns* gives the learner a chance to compose sequences based on shape, color and sound.

- Sort correct items when two attributes are given.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Two: Attributes

- Stage Two introduces the learner to the attributes of size and color using simple animations and short passages. The learner can participate in this activity in preparation for assessment.

Problem-Solving and Mathematical Reasoning Expanded Standard: Students apply a variety of problem-solving strategies to investigate and solve problems from across the curriculum as well as from practical applications.

- Use computer programs showing cause and effect.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage One: Press and Hold; Press and Release

- The learner activates a device to view a simple animation or listen to a simple sound effect. *Press and Hold* measures the duration of the learner's device activation. *Press and Release* counts the number of times the learner activates the device.

Problem-Solving and Mathematical Reasoning Expanded Standard, continued

- Use physical objects/people to demonstrate more/less, first/last.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Estimating

- Stage Four *Estimating* gives the learner an opportunity to demonstrate the ability to compare objects and groups of objects using vocabulary such as ‘more/less’ and ‘big/small.’

- Select and wear clothing appropriate to season and occasion.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Explore and Assess: Getting Dressed

- The learner is presented with several articles of clothing on the screen to explore. The learner selects an item to hear about the item. The learner is then asked to select the item of clothing best fitting the purpose stated by the computer.